

PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO SUPPRESS THE NAME "GALLINAGO" BRISSON, 1760 (CLASS AVES), AND PROPOSED SUBSTITUTION OF "CAPELLA" FRENZEL, 1801, FOR "GALLINAGO" KOCH, 1816, ON THE "OFFICIAL LIST OF GENERIC NAMES IN ZOOLOGY" (PROPOSED CORRECTION OF AN ERRONEOUS ENTRY IN "OPINION" 67)

By FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.

(Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature)

(Commission's reference Z.N.(S.)575)

The subject matter of the present application came to notice in the course of the checking of the entries on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* in connection with the projected publication of the *Official List* in book form and is concerned with the generic name *Gallinago* Koch, 1816 (*Syst. baier. Zool.* 1:312) which was placed on the *Official List* in *Opinion* 67 published in 1916 (*Smithson Publ.* 2409:180).

2. The generic name *Gallinago* Koch, 1816, was stated in *Opinion* 67 to have as its type species, *Scolopax gallinoga* Linnaeus, 1758 (*Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1:147) by absolute tautonymy, through the "media of Koch" (i.e. *Gallinago media* Koch, 1816, *loc. cit.* 1:314). This name was therefore a generic name applied to the Common Snipe.

3. When checking this part of *Opinion* 67, I observed that Hartert, after using the generic name *Gallinago* Koch for the Snipe in the main portion of his work relating to the genus concerned (Hartert, 1916, *Vögel paläarkt. Fauna* (2):1655), had later in the same work (1921, *ibid.* (3):2213) published a correction, pointing out that *Gallinago* Koch was a junior synonym of *Capella* Frenzel, 1801 (*Beschr. Vögel Wittenberg*:58), the type species of which was the nominal species *Capella coelestis* Frenzel, 1801 (*ibid.*:58), a nominal species which represented the same taxonomic species as did the nominal species *Scolopax gallinago* Linnaeus. I noted also that my colleague Commissioner James L. Peters (1934, *Check List Birds World* 2:274) accepted the name *Capella* Frenzel, sinking *Gallinago* Koch as a synonym.

4. As it was clearly not possible in these circumstances to leave the name *Gallinago* Koch on the *Official List* without prior resubmission to the International Commission, I wrote a letter (on 14th October 1945) to Dr. Peters asking for his views as to the action which it was desirable should be taken. Dr. Peters in his reply (of 6th December 1945) wrote:—"After *Capella* Frenzel was shown to be an earlier name than *Gallinago* Koch and of equal applicability, it was immediately adopted and is now in current use for the different species of Snipe. For this reason I believe the *Gallinago* should be expunged from the *Official List* and *Capella* substituted in its place. No useful purpose would be served by reinstating *Gallinago* Koch under suspension of the rules and suppressing *Capella*."

5. Quite recently I was led, for the reasons which I have explained in Application Z.N.(S.)701 (relating to the generic names *Bubo*, *Coturnix*, *Egretta*, and *Oriolus*)* to examine carefully M. J. Brisson's *Ornithologie* published in 1760, for I had already discovered that one name (*Egretta* Forster, 1817) that was already on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* was an invalid junior homonym of a totally overlooked name published in Brisson's *Ornithologie*. This search brought to light the existence of the name *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760 (*Ornithologie* 5 : 298-310), which thus greatly antedates the name *Capella* Frenzel, 1801. The name *Gallinago* was used by Brisson as the name for a subdivision of the genus *Scolopax*; he placed in it all except the first of the five species which he referred to *Scolopax*. All the species described in the *Ornithologie* are described initially under a French name, followed by a Latin diagnosis, at the end of which is given, in different type, the Latin name accepted by Brisson for the species in question, this in turn being followed, in the case of previously described species, by a detailed synonymy. The first of the species placed by Brisson in his *Gallinago* was cited under the French name "La Beccassine," the scientific name at the end of the Latin diagnosis being given simply as "*Gallinago*" (not because Brisson was a mononominalist, but because he customarily cited in this way the names of species when the "species" portion of the name consisted of the same word (i.e. was a single word) tautonymous with the generic name). In the synonymy of this species Brisson quoted the diagnosis given by Linnaeus in 1758 for his *Scolopax gallinago*, finishing this quotation as follows:—" *Gallinago*. Linn. Syst. Nat. ed. 10 Gen. 77 sp. 11 " (*Scolopax* being the 77th genus of birds in the 10th edition of the *Syst. Nat.* and *Scolopax gallinago* being the eleventh of the species referred by Linnaeus to this genus). Thus, we see clearly that this species is *Scolopax gallinago* Linnaeus, 1758 (: 147) and that, as its trivial name is tautonymous with the generic name selected by Brisson, it is the type species of *Gallinago* Brisson by absolute tautonymy. Accordingly, the name *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760, is not only a senior homonym of *Gallinago* Koch, 1816, but in addition is a senior synonym of Koch's generic name, Brisson's and Koch's nominal genera each having the same nominal species as its type species. The position so established created a new situation and one under which the entry on the *Official List* relating to *Gallinago* Koch was not only (as previously) subjectively defective (because of the subjective identification of the nominal species which are respectively the type species of *Capella* Frenzel, 1801, and of *Gallinago* Koch, 1816), but also objectively incorrect (through *Gallinago* Koch, being both an objective junior homonym, and an objective junior synonym, of *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760). Faced with this situation, it seemed to me that, since (as Dr. Peters had explained) the name *Capella* Frenzel had by now completely replaced the name *Gallinago* Koch, it would be confusing if now that transition had to be reversed, the name *Capella* Frenzel being displaced by *Gallinago* Brisson.

6. At this stage I consulted Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature who in his reply (dated 12th September 1952) wrote as follows: "If, as at first appeared, the question to be considered in the case of the name *Gallinago* had been whether the name *Gallinago* Koch, 1816, should be replaced on the *Official List* by its

*See pp. 82-92 of the present volume.

senior subjective synonym *Capella* Frenzel, 1801, I should have been strongly in favour of that course, for now that *Gallinago* Koch has been completely replaced by the name *Capella* Frenzel, I should have thought it most unfortunate if, through *Gallinago* Koch being already on the *Official List*, it had been necessary to abandon current practice by reverting to the use of the name *Gallinago* Koch. Now that it appears that the oldest generic name for the Common Snipe is *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760, I hold the same view for the same reason. I accordingly consider that the best course will be for the International Commission to suppress Brisson's *Gallinago*, to remove Koch's *Gallinago* from the *Official List* and to insert in its place the name *Capella* Frenzel. The trivial name *gallinago* Linnaeus, 1758 (as published in the combination *Scolopax gallinago*) should, I agree, now be placed on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names*. Naturally, however, the trivial name *coelestis* Frenzel, 1801 (the trivial name of the type species of *Capella* Frenzel) ought not to be placed on that *Official List*, for, although nomenclatorially it is an available name, it is only a junior synonym of *gallinago* Linnaeus and therefore can never be needed."

7. A settlement of this case is urgently required, for at present the problem presented by the name *Gallinago* Koch represents one of the obstacles which is holding up the publication of the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* in book form. In view of the advice received in this case—as set out in paragraphs 4 and 6 above—I recommend that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature should:—

- (1) use its plenary powers to suppress the generic name *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;
- (2) delete the name *Gallinago* Koch, 1816, from the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology*, at the same time correcting *Opinion* 67 to the extent necessary;
- (3) substitute on the foregoing *Official List* the name *Capella* Frenzel, 1801 (type species, by monotypy: *Capella coelestis* Frenzel, 1801) for the name proposed, under (2) above, to be removed therefrom;
- (4) place the trivial name *gallinago* Linnaeus, 1758 (as published in the combination *Scolopax gallinago*) on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*;
- (5) place the under-mentioned names on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology*:—
 - (a) *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760, as proposed, under (1) above, to be suppressed under the plenary powers;
 - (b) *Gallinago* Koch, 1816 (junior homonym, of *Gallinago* Brisson, 1760);
 - (c) *Capella* Keyserling & Blasius, 1840, *Wirbelth. Europas* 1:9 (junior homonym of *Capella* Frenzel, 1801).